

Message Text

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20

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OPR-02 A-01 SR-02 ORM-01 VO-03 SCA-01

AID-05 FDRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAJ-01 /065 W

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R 220751Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5536

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 2494

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: US, AS, PFOR, SREF

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCES GOA POLICY ON RECEIVING
SOUTH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: CANBERRA 2461

1. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT ON 22 APRIL PRIME
MINISTER WHITLAM ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOA WOULD BE PREPARED TO
RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES:

A. THE SPOUSES AND CHILDREN OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS
STUDYING IN AUSTRALIA.

B. THE SPOUSES AND CHILDREN UNDER 21 OF AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS
OR OF PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA WHO HAVE A CLAIM TO AUSTRALIAN
CITIZENSHIP. INSTRUCTIONS WOULD BE SENT TO THE AUSTRALIAN
EMBASSY IN SAIGON TO PROCESS SUCH PEOPLE ON AUSTRALIAN IDENTITY
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C. VIETNAMESE WITH A LONG AND CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE GOA WHOSE LIVES WOULD BE IN DANGER IF THEY WERE TO REMAIN IN VIETNAM. WHITLAM SAID THERE WERE VERY FEW OF THESE.

2. WHITLAM SAID THAT AUSTRALIA'S ABILITY TO ASSIST THESE REFUGEES WAS MADE DIFFICULT BY THE RELUCTANCE OF THE GVN TO ISSUE EXIT PERMITS ENABLING THESE REFUGEES TO LEAVE SOUTH VIETNAM.

3. COMMENT: THIS STATEMENT, COUPLED WITH THE INFORMATION CONTAINED REFTEL, THAT THE GOA IS WITHDRAWING ALL ITS OFFICIAL PERSONNEL FROM SAIGON BY APRIL 24, MEANS THAT THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY BE IN A POSITION TO DO LITTLE MORE THAN MAKE A PUBLIC RELATIONS GESTURE TOWARDS SOUTH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. WE ANTICIPATE THAT GOA WILL CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS ON MAKING HUMANITARIAN GESTURES AND DIPLOMATIC MOVES DESIGNED IN PART TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE DRV. THIS CONTRASTS MARKEDLY WITH THE PROPOSAL MADE PUBLIC BY OPPOSITION LEADER FRASER (REPEATED APRIL 21) THAT THE GOA SHOULD BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE QTE SOME THOUSANDS END QTE OF ADULT REFUGEES FROM SOUTH VIETNAM. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES WHITLAM LIKELY TO COME UNDER CRITICISM FOR CYNICALLY DRAGGING HIS FEET AT A TIME THAT CALLED FOR ACTION TO TAKE ANY SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES.
GREEN

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